BalKrishnalalji: Swaroop

BalKrishnalalji, more fondly addressed as Lalji or Laddoo Gopal arrives from Goloka, is born in Mathura and then travels to Gokul on the stormy night of Janmashtami.

We, human beings, dress up BalKrishnalalji with beautiful Shringar on this day. At midnight, he is put in a cradle, his Palna. We then rock him to and fro with love and faith and place several toys next to his cradle so that he can amuse himself.

Balkrishnalalji, a 3-month-old baby, captivates our hearts and minds with his Bal Leela. This child form of Krishna is innocent, easy to please and has a short memory. So we serve BalKrishnalalji with the hope that he will forgive us when we make mistakes and love us despite our flaws.

The Laddoo Gopal story

BalKrishnalalji's left hand is straight but he holds a Laddoo in his right hand. In some Swaroops, he holds out the Laddoo for others to eat. But in other Swaroops, he holds it close to his chin, as if he is just about to eat it. In some Swaroops he has a Laddoo below his left hand too. Why?

Gusainji started serving BalKrishnalalji at a very young age. His mother gives give him one Laddoo every day to offer to the lord. One day, Gusainji sees BalKrishnalalji eating the entire Laddoo that he has just offered to him. Gusainji feels BalKrishnalalji will not give him anything in the form of 'Prasad'. So he stops the lord from eating the entire Laddoo.

Vallabhacharya witnesses the entire experience looks at Gusainji and says, “Vittalnatha, even if the lord does eat all that we offer, we will never be left empty-handed. God always showers his grace on us.” When Gusainji’s mother comes to know about it, she says, “I will give you two Laddoos every day. Offer both to the lord. BalKrishnalalji will eat one and give you the other one as his ‘Prasad’!” Maybe that is why some forms of BalKrishnalalji have a laddoo in each hand.

BalKrishnalalji’s Gaur Shyam Swaroop

BalKrishnalalji’s hands and feet have a fair complexion but his body has a dark complexion, hence the name ‘Gaur Shyam’. BalKrishnalalji’s left leg is folded and rests completely on the ground. His right leg is folded too but is upright and the sole rests on the ground.

Significance of the swaroop

Laddoos are sweet and are made with several ingredients and a lot of effort. We get moulded into laddoos, better, more humane human beings only when we undergo different kinds of experiences in our lives. We can enjoy the Laddoo of spirituality, Ananda, Bliss, only after we experience, satiate and outgrow our hungers for materialistic Laddoos.

BalKrishnalalji does share his Laddoos with other Gopas but he too feasts on them. We can empathise with other people’s hungers only when we experience hunger. We can feed the many hungers of others only if we satiate all our hungers. In all

his Leelas, Krishna takes good care of himself first for he knows that only then can he take care of the entire cosmos…..

BalKrishnalalji's Leela

According to the 7th chapter of the 10th Skanda of the Bhagavad Puran, BalKrishnalalji's form represents these three Leelas of Krisha as an infant.

Putana Vad Leela

When Kamsa realizes that the baby destined to kill him is alive in Gokul, he sends Putana to kill all the babies in Gokul. Putana has no children of her own. She hesitates to do so but loves Kamsa so she blindly obeys him.

She transforms herself into a beautiful woman and reaches the courtyard of Nanda. Yashoda and Rohini give her utmost respect as a wet-nurse. Krishna, a mere child of 6 days looks at her innocently and gurgles.

He is hungry and eager to drink the milk of any mother who is willing to offer it to him. Putana hides her evil intentions behind a lovely smile as she starts feeding Krishna with her poisoned milk. But can we ever hide anything from Krishna?

Krishna, the all-knowing one – simply suckles the life out of Putana. Only when Yashoda and Rohini see the gigantic lifeless form of the demoness Putana, do they realize their folly – and Krishna's true nature!

Trinavarta Leela

Kamsa is furious and heartbroken to learn that his beloved Putana is dead! He invokes Trinavarta, a whirlwind and gives him explicit instructions. He asks him to sweep into Gokul, carry the dark-hued Krishna in his arms, lift him high up in the air and then dash him to the ground in front of his mother Yashoda's eyes. He says nothing short of this will please him.

Trinavarta flies off to Gokul, finds BalKrishnalalji and lifts him high up in the air. He thinks he can complete his task within seconds. But BalKrishnalalji suddenly develops a strong liking for heights. The stillness and calmness that accompanies that altitude seems so soothing…like Goloka….

He decides to take a long nap right there. He becomes heavier and heavier…. Trinavarta is awestruck. He cannot compete with this entity called Krishna. Before he can gather his wits and do something about it Krishna turns around in his sleep in the middle of the skies and holds Trinavarta's neck casually……

Trinavarta starts choking on his breath, as Krishna calmly punctures the air and his ego out of him. He starts gasping and descends to the earth to get a breath of fresh normal air. He carries Krishna in his arms with the little energy that he has left and puts him back gently into his cradle. He does not want to irk him. Not anymore. Krishna slumbers through it all but refuses to loosen his grasp over Trinavarta's neck till he breathes his last…..

Krishna then starts laughing in his sleep, as if in a dream and a trance….as Rohini and Yashoda come rushing eagerly to check

if anything is amiss. Such is Krishna's Leela…….no one knows what he is doing but all is well. Always.

Shakat - Bhanjan Leela

Kamsa’s anger multiplies manifold when he learns of Trinavarta’s death. He sends Shakata, a demon who hides amidst the spokes of a cartwheel.

Celebrations are on in Nanda’s house. Garga, a wise old sage has been invited for the naming ceremony of Krishna and Balarama. Yashoda gives Krishna his favourite flute to play with for a while and goes off to take care of the arrangements.

That is when Shakata detaches himself from the cart and rolls down the pathway- towards Krishna. Krishna is playing merrily with his little flute. Yashoda and Nanda, now overanxious and intuitive to danger, see the cartwheel hurtling towards Krishna. They scream and rush to stop it – but with Krishna around– there was no need to worry. At all.

Little Krishna gurgles when he sees the cartwheel coming his way. He likes the new toy that his uncle who lives in Mathura has sent to him with so much love. He strikes it with his flute to set it rolling the other way…..and that is enough…….to shatter the lovely cartwheel to smithereens!

Yashoda and Nanda hug him tightly but Krishna looks at them petulantly because he did not get a proper chance to play with the toy that his dear uncle sent him….He decides to thank him later on personally….

The history behind the Swaroop of BalKrishnalalji

It is believed that BalKrishnalalji’s Swaroop got entwined in the ‘Janoi’ of Vallabhacharya when he was having his bath in the waters of the Yamuna. Vallabhacharya served BalKrishnalalji’s Swaroop with great devotion. He then passed on the Seva to his son Gusainji who in turn passed it on to his sixth son Yadunathji.

BalKrishnalalji’s Swaroop was enshrined in Gokul and Ahmedabad after this. This Swaroop is enshrined in a Haveli in Surat now. It has been there for the past 300 years.

Krishna may have incarnated centuries ago, but we all continue to experience his Leelas, his Maya and his Grace even today, isn’t it?